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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

later: Mr. ALFARO-PINEDA (El Salvador)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)
(Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- (a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VI, Sect. B), A/46/56-E/1991/6 and Corr.1, A/46/137-E/1991/40, A/46/281-E/1991/112, A/46/315, 360, 361, 362 and Corr.1, 366, 414, 501/Rev.1; A/C.3/46/L.4, L.5, L.6)

1. Ms. AL-ALAWI (Bahrain) said that the concept of "a society for all" meant the creation of opportunities for all members of society to develop their potential to the full and allow them to express their needs and concerns. Bahrain had adopted social and economic plans based on the principle that man was both the objective of development and the means for its achievement. Projects and programmes had not been restricted to particular social groups, and the objective was to promote the social and economic welfare and security of all.

2. Bahrain's sense of responsibility for those of its citizens who belonged to special groups was derived from the heritage and social traditions of the country, and it had thus accorded particular interest to youth, the disabled and the elderly. Youth occupied a special place in the social structure since it was uniquely endowed with those characteristics that contributed to the achievement of a society's goals. Her country had therefore adopted a policy of making use of the energies and resources of youth and of integrating young people into its national development programmes. It had paid increased attention to youth problems and had studied the situation of young people with a view to formulating the necessary proposals for youth welfare.

3. The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995 would provide an opportunity to translate principles into a sound programme of action and to focus world attention on issues relating to youth. A review and appraisal must be made of progress and of the obstacles encountered in implementing the guidelines endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/14, and programmes must be formulated to establish future strategies for youth policies for the year 2000 and beyond.

4. In the context of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, her country accorded particular importance to the elderly because of their special social status and out of appreciation for their contribution to society, as it was enjoined to do by the principles of the Islamic religion. Social institutions had been established to integrate that segment of society into development and to provide it with welfare services. In November 1991, Bahrain would act as host to an international conference on health for the elderly which would seek to draw up a scenario for the provision of health services to the elderly, to promote self-reliance on their part and to encourage families to keep them at home instead of in old-age homes or

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(Ms. Al-Alawi, Bahrain)

hospitals. There would also be an exhibition of equipment specially designed for use by the elderly. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of the World Programme would provide an opportunity to review progress and to generate momentum for a better response to ageing in the future.

5. The International Year of Disabled Persons had aroused international awareness of the disabled as persons having rights and obligations on an equal footing with others. Bahrain had formulated a clear policy to assist it in the long-term planning of new services, and the principles on which that policy had been based were the same as those of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, namely full participation and equality. It had established institutions for the care of disabled persons that had been judged by experts as being in accordance with a clear policy and in keeping with the principles of the Decade.

6. Given the special position accorded to the family by the Constitution, the country had supported the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family. Its approach stemmed from the principles of the Islamic religion, which regarded the family as a foundation of society that must be surrounded by safeguards to help it to cohere and strengthen its ability to meet the needs of contemporary life.

7. Mr. AL-SAUD (Saudi Arabia) said that illiteracy, as an obstacle to participation in social life, was a reality for some one billion people in the world. Guaranteeing to all without exception the right to learn was without doubt the single most effective way of contributing to social development.

8. The development of education and of human resources were priorities for both the Government and the private sector in Saudi Arabia. The present ruler of the country had been its first minister of education and had laid the foundation for a modern educational system, and he had a great personal interest in the subject. The Kingdom offered free education, at all levels, to its citizens and residents. The five-year plan of 1985-1989 had allocated some 20 per cent of revenues to education, and the country's seven universities had had an enrolment of some 100,000 students by the end of 1990.

9. In the developing countries, the development of institutional infrastructure to accommodate the increasing numbers and proportions of the elderly and to continue providing for their welfare was, as had been stated in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/361), essential to the implementation of the action programme on ageing. The draft set of United Nations Principles for Older Persons, which was before the Assembly at its current session, was extremely important for the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. There was also a need to elaborate a workable international or regional strategy on ageing, and his delegation called upon the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to work together with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the elaboration of a strategy centred on the identification of ways and means. It hoped that the organizations

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(Mr. Al-Saud, Saudi Arabia)

participating would be joined by those of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

10. The Secretary-General's proposal, made in document A/46/360, for the preparation of a world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond was a useful one, given the need to cope with the challenges now facing youth. The development of youth and its integration in social development was an important step for the future of mankind. Health, housing, family planning and unemployment were all problems encountered by youth, particularly in the developing world, and the United Nations regional commissions had a key role to play in their regard.

11. The topics of the International Youth Year, namely participation, development and peace, were priorities for all social development programmes, whether at the national, regional or international levels. His Government supported those priorities and considered that international and regional organizations should be encouraged to gather statistics and conduct studies relating to youth so that all Governments might profit from the programmes developed. Saudi Arabia was proud of the emergence of a Muslim Saudi youth capable of interacting with modern, technological life. A public agency for youth welfare had been established in 1974 with the goal of elaborating forward-looking programmes for youth; it gave its support to numerous sports clubs in all parts of the country, and it had established criteria for the education, training and welfare of youth in accordance with the principles of the Islamic religion and the heritage of Saudi society.

12. The elaboration of standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, as recommended by the Commission for Social Development, would ensure the active participation of all Governments in the integration of disabled persons in building national capacities. In keeping with the Islamic religion, his Government had accorded particular importance to disabled persons and had established special educational institutions for them in various parts of the country. The Ministry of Education had established an agency dealing with matters relating to disabled persons and was providing them with opportunities for study and work. A priority matter to which attention should be directed was that of those disabled as a result of armed conflict or civil unrest, since most such victims were children and young persons.

13. Saudi Arabia had established an integrated system of social services that ensured each citizen a secure life and a civilized standard of living. Commitment to the welfare of citizens and of the nation was an Islamic principle and one that ensured social stability. By 1990, the Government had made available \$2.3 billion in loans to citizens for the construction of private housing. Expenditure on social welfare had amounted to some \$440 million in 1990. Advanced health centres had been established in various parts of the country, and health care was provided free of charge to citizens and to pilgrims to the Holy Places. Social life in Saudi Arabia centred on

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(Mr. Al-Saud, Saudi Arabia)

the family and on relations among its members in accordance with the principles and traditions of Islam, and the country provided its citizens and residents with social services in accordance with the best of standards.

14. Mr. RALEBITSO (Lesotho) said that social development could not be achieved without economic progress and sustained efforts to ensure international stability. The unprecedented crises that continued to affect the African continent, together with adverse climatic conditions and the burden of external-debt servicing, had thrown national economies into disarray and caused widespread deterioration in social conditions. The initial efforts to achieve the objectives of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development had met with serious obstacles. It was therefore necessary to take a broader view of development and to recognize that economic progress was impossible without a firm social basis.

15. Economic-reform programmes must take into account the impact of structural-adjustment programmes on the poorest sectors of society. Emphasis therefore must be placed on improving social conditions and developing human resources. His Government had identified priority areas and had mobilized funds to implement projects. In that regard, he appealed to the United Nations and the international community to increase their cooperation assistance to Lesotho in order to improve the flow of development funding to that country.

16. Lesotho had taken measures to ensure active participation by young men and women in its political, economic, social and cultural life. A comprehensive programme to address questions relating to youth had been set up and training in agriculture and income-generating activities was provided to young people at district centres. His delegation fully supported the proposals for the draft world youth programme of action. In order to achieve the objectives in youth development, Lesotho appealed to the relevant United Nations agencies and other international organizations to give favourable consideration to requests for increased resources for its youth programmes.

17. His Government, in cooperation with national associations for the disabled and international organizations, continued to take measures to improve the situation of disabled persons. A national rehabilitation centre provided training for the disabled to improve their living standard and integrate them into society. His delegation urged all Governments and the private sector to work together to ensure progress in implementing the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In that connection he stressed the need to support the establishment of effective national organizations of disabled persons, particularly in countries such as Lesotho which required international assistance.

18. His delegation endorsed the preliminary draft global targets on ageing for the decade 1992-2001 contained in the annex to the Secretary-General's report (A/46/361). The targets set forth positive measures for ensuring the

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(Mr. Ralebitso, Lesotho)

continued participation of the elderly in society. Resources must be made available through the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to meet the social needs of that important group. He was encouraged by progress made in preparations for the International Year of the Family and urged the Secretary-General to continue the activities planned in that field. Lesotho had stepped up its efforts to coordinate preparations for the Year and was conducting information campaigns through radio broadcasting and local newspapers. Due attention was given to the rights and responsibilities of the family in recognition of its fundamental role in society. The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare had established a programme to assist lost and abandoned children and was implementing a project to provide training in evaluating occupational safety in the workplace. Lastly, his delegation fully supported the consultations on the convening of a world summit for social development, which should define priority measures for action and international cooperation in that field.

19. Mr. HUSSAIN (Pakistan) said that since the adoption of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development, social conditions in a large number of developing countries left much to be desired. Since 1971 the number of least developed countries had doubled. One fifth of the world's population lived in unimaginable poverty. The capacity of developing countries to achieve their basic social objectives had been seriously affected by the prevailing economic situation. Programmes relating to health, food, education and housing had been sacrificed on the altar of structural adjustment in the interest of so-called "economic development". The international community must address that situation by analysing the problems and adopting a holistic approach to development, particularly in the developing world. In that context, his delegation supported the convening of the world summit on social development, which would address the issue of social development in all its aspects.

20. The Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes, referred to in document A/46/414, offered possibilities for improving social development. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had taken the lead in adopting a regional social-development strategy. It might be appropriate if FAO and other United Nations agencies involved in hunger alleviation adopted similar regional approaches to perennial food shortages in developing countries. Consideration should be given to the possibility of setting up regional grain banks for countries experiencing serious food shortages.

21. The fact that 80 per cent of the world's disabled were in developing countries was a sad reflection of the level of social development in those countries. The real tragedy was that 60 per cent of such disability cases could have been easily avoided through effective and low-cost measures. With regard to the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, his delegation supported the new approach "From awareness to action" and the elaboration of a long-term strategy to integrate disabled persons into society through equalization of opportunities. The recommendations made by the

(Mr. Hussain, Pakistan)

Secretary-General in his report (A/46/366) on the elaboration of international policies and mechanisms for integrating the disabled into the mainstream of national life and the formulation of legislation to protect their rights should be given careful consideration.

22. To integrate the disabled into society, Pakistan had set up a network of special-education centres throughout the country. A National Training Centre for Disabled Persons had been established to prepare them for employment and there were plans to set up other such centres. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had been incorporated into the National Plan of Action to meet the needs of the disabled in Pakistan.

23. His delegation looked forward to the formulation of a draft world youth programme of action and would be working actively in that regard in the Commission for Social Development. Pakistan had established a Youth Investment Promotion Society to deal with unemployment among educated youth by providing them with technical assistance and loans on easy terms. Vocational training units had also been set up to provide young people with skills to enable them to obtain gainful employment.

24. Pakistan supported United Nations efforts to improve the social and economic conditions of elderly persons throughout the world. It had endorsed the action programme on ageing and hoped that the decade-long strategy would be ready for launching at the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. In Pakistan, the Ministry of Health, Special Education and Social Welfare had the responsibility of implementing programmes for the ageing. The National Committee on Ageing had prepared a National Plan of Action which set forth programmes to enable the ageing population to enjoy a life of fulfilment, health and security in their families and communities. The National Committee's recommendations were being implemented in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations. A proposal was under consideration to establish senior citizen clubs in order to provide modest health care, recreational and social services, training, and subsistence allowances to needy and disabled elderly people.

25. Since statistical data and economic indicators could not reflect the degree of human suffering, his delegation expressed satisfaction at the emphasis being given to indicators relating to social values and the material dimension of human well-being. The International Year of the Family could play an important role in fostering an awareness of the various roles played by that fundamental unit of society. His delegation was encouraged by progress made in preparing for the Year and hoped that the Commission for Social Development would elaborate the programme for its observance well in advance of 1994. Pakistan would continue to promote the social and economic development of its people based on justice, equality and participation in development.

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26. Mrs. PARRINO (United States of America) said that in a democracy the task of the Government was to remove the barriers to participation in society. The United States was committed to social development through equal opportunity for all, and sought to remove obstacles to enable all individuals to realize their full potential. Her country's achievements in that regard included its social security system, the 1964 Civil Rights Act and laws against age discrimination. At the local level, there were senior citizen centres, adult-education programmes and youth programmes. Numerous private associations provided services to various groups. The United States conducted international aid programmes and her country's charitable institutions contributed substantially to social development in the world.

27. The United States had achieved much because it emphasized pragmatic solutions to social problems. Her Government would host a conference on defining national disability policies in order to develop concrete plans of action and was also sponsoring a regional conference in Eastern Europe focusing on disability rights and employment. Although resources were limited, much could still be done through a commitment to achievable solutions.

28. Mrs. SAMONTE-LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that her country was following innovative approaches to problems confronting youth. A unique curriculum was being developed for a theatre academy in Manila for street children, ethnic youth and young people with disabilities in order to combine the arts with income-earning skills. The programme involved a teacher-training workshop on creative theatre arts to encourage theatre productions by and for street children and other disadvantaged young people and turn them into productive and responsible citizens. The programme also sought to mobilize cultural resources, provide information on socio-economic development and bring about attitudinal changes to promote national unity and progress.

29. The Earth Savers' Movement, a non-governmental organization, made effective use of the arts and the media as catalysts for community development, especially for the benefit of tribal groups, women, farmers and fishermen, and as a means of rehabilitating street children, disabled young people and young drug offenders.

30. For the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, her country had proposed a cooperative endeavour focusing on the performing arts and the media as dynamic and popular communication tools to stimulate action towards environmental protection. That unique theatre encounter would commit the participants to action plans for sustainable socio-economic development.

31. Mr. FLOREAN (Romania) said that a considerable effort was necessary to bring about the moral and economic rehabilitation of the countries that had abandoned communism, including Romania. The spiritual vacuum resulting from communist atheism had weakened the fundamental unit of society, the family. Massive rural migration to large industrial centres had led to the rapid decay of villages and the emergence of uprooted groups.

(Mr. Florean, Romania)

32. During the difficult transition to an open political system, attention should focus on revitalizing society as a whole and protecting children and other vulnerable groups. The entire social system must be speedily reorganized in order to meet the needs of a pluralist democratic society and a market economy. In order to deal with the serious social tensions caused by increased unemployment and reduced income, the new Government had decided to focus on social welfare, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, in accordance with current conditions in the country and the need to ensure economic stability.

33. The 1994 International Year of the Family promised to increase awareness of such issues as single-parent families, the advancement of women, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, disability, ageing and the education and adoption of children. To address the problem of abandoned children and flaws in the adoption process inherited from the former regime in Romania, the Parliament had recently enacted new legislation on adoption to guarantee the rights of children in accordance with international norms. Measures had also been taken to increase public awareness of the situation of disabled persons. The future standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons should be practical and action-oriented.

34. Policies concerning the elderly should focus not only on helping older persons to retain their independence and to contribute to society, but also on measures to benefit very elderly persons. With regard to youth, national policies and programmes would greatly benefit from international, regional and bilateral cooperation. Since the future of children was linked to that of the environment, he attached great importance to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which would undoubtedly be a success.

35. Mr. OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD (Mauritania) said that, since the end of the cold war would allow more resources to be allocated to social development, the problems of youth should receive greater attention. The increasing phenomenon of the breakup of the family and the emergence of new social ills made the themes of participation, development and peace more significant than ever, and fully justified the proposed draft world youth programme of action.

36. In the developing world, young people were often victims of inadequate socio-educational structures and of the consequences of structural-adjustment programmes. The dwindling rates of school enrolment and youth employment in such countries led to juvenile delinquency and crime. Since the world's political, economic and social future was in the hands of its young people, it must foster their sense of social responsibility.

37. Mauritania had a history of active participation in international forums concerning youth, and had been among the first countries to sign international conventions on the rights of young people, the latest being the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Mauritania had already ratified. It also

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(Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, Mauritania)

cooperated with other countries of the Maghreb in socio-educational activities, and had helped to establish the Union of Maghreb Associations for the Protection of Children.

38. He urged the United Nations to consider convening a second world youth assembly. He also urged Member States, the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to strengthen their programmes for youth, particularly in the areas of training and the fight against drug abuse. Priority attention must also be given to young people who had left school or who were victims of conflicts or natural disasters. Lastly, society must appeal to young people themselves not to succumb to temptations which could compromise their future, but to embrace the principles of dignity, justice and general welfare.

39. Mrs. KOVALSKA (Ukraine) said that since international stability and peace largely depended on improving the social situation, a comprehensive approach to social issues was necessary in order to streamline and unite efforts in that area. The documentation for item 94 (a) reflected such an approach by stressing, inter alia, the relationship between social and economic development and between development and human rights, the role of social progress in consolidating peace and security, the responsibility of each country for its own social development and for the strengthening of international stability, the need to integrate all sectors of society into development and the role of the human being as both agent and beneficiary of socio-economic development. However, although the restructuring of the United Nations in the social field had already begun, it still lagged behind progress in other fields.

40. She supported the strengthening of the United Nations Office at Vienna as the main focal point in the United Nations system for promoting international cooperation on social issues. Although she appreciated United Nations activities to benefit such vulnerable groups as disabled persons, the elderly, youth and the family, she regretted that their goals had not yet been fully realized.

41. The Economic and Social Council, and particularly its Commission for Social Development, represented an especially valuable resource. She supported the Commission's proposals to hold its sessions annually, to convene a Conference of Ministers Responsible for Social Affairs within the European Region and to hold a world summit for social development. It would also be useful to dedicate some sessions of the Economic and Social Council exclusively to social topics.

42. Ukraine was one of the countries in which political reform had considerably outpaced economic and social reform. Furthermore, the situation was aggravated by environmental problems. Ukraine's entire territory had been declared an ecological disaster area as a result of the Chernobyl accident, which had exposed some 1.8 million Ukrainians to direct atomic radiation.

(Mrs. Kovalska, Ukraine)

43. In addition to measures to mitigate the social consequences of the environmental crisis, the Government was revising current labour laws to guarantee citizens, and particularly vulnerable groups, their right to work under the new economic conditions. It had also adopted legislation protecting victims of the Chernobyl accident, and was considering new legislation on pensions. In accordance with the relevant international instruments, comprehensive programmes were being elaborated for the advancement of vulnerable sectors of the population. The creation of a socially-oriented market economy and the harmonization of economic and social life were among Ukraine's highest priorities.

44. Mr. MOR (Israel) said that in the wake of the first International Day for the Elderly, attention should be given to the problems of the world's rapidly growing elderly population. In Israel, life expectancy had reached 73.9 years for men and 77.5 years for women. Of the 200,000 immigrants who had come to Israel in 1990, 15 per cent were over the age of 60. Since the country expected to absorb over 1 million new immigrants in the next four years, funds for immigrant absorption were the single largest item in the Government's 1991 budget. Elderly immigrants were entitled to the same social benefits as native-born Israelis, including medical and health services, welfare in case of need and social-security payments.

45. Of the 10 per cent of Israelis who were elderly, 40 per cent were over the age of 75. Earlier estimates of the growth rate of the latter group had not foreseen the tremendous influx of new immigrants to Israel, which made unexpected demands on the country's resources, since the most rapidly growing population group was also the most dependent and in need of special services.

46. Despite a chronic lack of funds and manpower, Israel's programmes for the elderly were growing in number, size and diversity. Such programmes sought to help older people to help themselves, and focused on the provision of services to the elderly in their homes. The Government's Service for the Elderly helped to develop and regulate community and institutional services. The 1988 Long-Term Nursing Insurance Law provided welfare allowances for persons in need of nursing care who were not institutionalized. About 80,000 individuals had access to homes for the elderly, sheltered housing, home care and prepared meals for the home-bound, and day-care centres for the disabled elderly. The day-care centres also provided employment, psychiatric and other social services. Moreover, the Association for Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel and the Public Council for the Aged worked to expand Israel's network of services for elderly people.

47. Israel was ready to share its experience in dealing with issues concerning the elderly and to cooperate with other countries in the areas of resource mobilization, institutional development, training, research and technical cooperation, in a common effort to ensure respect for the dignity of elderly persons and to improve their quality of life.

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48. Mrs. RAOELINA (Madagascar) said she was very concerned about the high rate of poverty, hunger, illness, illiteracy and infant mortality in the developing countries, particularly in Africa. Those problems, which were exacerbated by such external factors as growing foreign debt, deteriorating terms of trade, protectionist measures and the stringent monetary and financial policies of developed countries, flagrantly contradicted the principle of the right to development. Since development must be measured not only in terms of productivity but also in terms of human welfare, she supported the convening of a world summit for social development, the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes (A/46/414) and the continuing application of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development.

49. Madagascar's family-protection laws provided for the freedom and equality of spouses and of different family structures. The disintegration of the family unit and the decreased purchasing power of households had resulted in a variety of social ills. Although she was pleased that many States were parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Madagascar had ratified, she regretted that in practice, children often bore the brunt of the problems caused by economic, social and political crises. She therefore welcomed such United Nations initiatives as the International Year of the Family and the policies and programmes involving youth.

50. Public-health problems, including malnutrition, pollution and lack of sanitation infrastructure and essential medications, could not be solved unless programmes to address them were given additional resources. Environmental issues were also a priority, since environmental degradation had been exacerbated by rapid population growth.

51. Poor countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, were subject to such severe external constraints that they were unable to choose their manner of development and often followed inappropriate development models. Since the right to development was a fundamental human right, the developed countries had a duty to support developing countries in their efforts to enhance the health, education and freedom of their citizens. In addition, the cultural characteristics of developing countries must be respected by foreign investors.

52. Lastly, she hoped that the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs would be provided with adequate resources to implement resolutions on social development.

53. Mrs. SUVARNATEMEE (Thailand) said that the promotion and protection of children was an integral part of Thailand's national development plan. The Government was particularly concerned about survival rights of newborn infants and young children, and the basic rights of mothers-to-be and young mothers and had recently increased maternity leave for women in government service. The Government was also concerned about the availability and quality of education, for which it had provided the necessary funds, and had taken special measures for the children of construction workers, who moved with their parents and had no formal and continuous education.

(Mrs. Suvarnatemee, Thailand)

54. Another major concern was abuse and exploitation of child labour. A national committee composed of representatives from the public and private sectors had been established to formulate guidelines, and domestic laws and regulations had been strengthened. Thailand greatly appreciated the help given by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Government had recently approved Thailand's accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

55. Thailand supported and had participated in activities to prepare for the 1994 International Year of the Family and had established a National Committee on the Family, whose activities included raising public awareness, collecting data, conducting research and an information campaign emphasizing responsible parenting.

56. Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile) said that, despite the Committee's valuable discussions and wealth of ideas and proposals, it always took too long for ideas to be put into effect. The problem was a political one - political sensibility, political understanding, political priorities and political will - and members must consider seriously how to reach a genuine political agreement to make social development a priority issue in international cooperation. To that end, he had a number of comments.

57. In the past 10 years the world social situation had deteriorated; there was more poverty and unemployment, and family and social stability were being undermined. In fact there was a global social crisis which called for united action. There was a growing consensus in favour of such action on the environment, drugs, population and other issues. Why not the same priority for human beings?

58. Bearing in mind the political angle, decisions were based on the interplay of national and international interests and pressures. The social crisis was also a crisis of collective security, and security was mutual. Peace was not simply the absence of war: there could be no stable security in the North without security in the South, nor security for advantaged societies without security for the marginalized and dispossessed. Social peace was a fundamental principle of world peace and the main threats to security today were economic, social, humanitarian and ecological. Unless something was done, the developed world would gradually become a ghetto of wellbeing, protected by military and other means from attack by those excluded from development. Already in Latin America and the Caribbean, where some 180 million people lived in extreme poverty, private security services were on the increase, certain sectors were closed off and violence and criminality were a major worry. That was also true for major cities in the developed world.

59. The only long-term solution to the current social crisis was sustained and sustainable development, based on high growth rates which would generate the wealth needed to absorb poverty and marginalization - a growth based on

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

open and socially-oriented market economies and equality of opportunity for people and countries. That was the valuable experience that the developed world could pass on to the developing world. Most developing countries, and now the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, had opted for that path. But the social costs were heavy and the international community showed no signs of action to help and strengthen the historic process now under way.

60. For example, there were still double standards in international economic relations. The developing countries' efforts to balance national accounts resulted in huge balance-of-payments deficits; in opening their markets they faced severe protectionism in sectors of basic interest to them; privatization met with requests for the State to assume the external debts of private enterprises which could not pay; and acceptance of the principle of free movement of the factors of production met with increasing barriers to the movement of persons. In addition, there was a failure to understand that there could be no stable democracy without stable development. The developed countries doubtless welcomed the improved respect for human rights and representative government during the 1980s but they talked of their change of attitude towards the third world and of "development fatigue", a dwindling interest in international cooperation for development. That trend was dangerous and could result in temporary reversions to authoritarianism, as in Haiti.

61. There was a consensus on what constituted economic efficiency, but not on social efficiency. In fact, the two were interdependent and the problem was to establish a balance between them. Recent developments in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had brought the problem of poverty to the forefront, although so far no one had produced a coherent set of social measures, recognized internationally, to open the way to a social development doctrine as comprehensive as the one that existed on economic development. The Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes would be a good point of departure. Priority should be given to the least developed countries.

62. Social development was a matter for both governments and individuals; they played a complementary role. Much could be done through the private sector - non-governmental and religious organizations, trade unions, universities and society as a whole. The problem was how to ensure greater State and market efficiency to meet the growing social demands. In that connection he stressed the importance of a world summit on social development. The preparatory period would provide an opportunity for achieving a consensus on the guiding concepts of social development and on setting priorities, drawing up international standards and principles, identifying tasks for the United Nations system and stimulating national, regional and international action, both public and private. However, Chile believed that such a summit would be successful only if based on a broad consensus.

63. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados) said that over the years the United Nations had provided guidelines encouraging Governments to implement policies to arrest social marginalization for the most vulnerable groups in society - youth, the disabled and the ageing. Although the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons would end in 1992 with many of its goals unfulfilled, particularly in developing countries, it was now recognized that those goals were critically related to the political, social and economic development of each country.

64. Failure to tackle the worsening economic conditions in developing countries would cloud the prospects for social development. Poverty continued unabated, and it was estimated that there were over 500 million disabled people in the world, some 80 per cent of them in developing countries. Stagnation in the developing countries' economies was exacerbated by massive debt servicing, forcing some Governments to introduce structural-adjustment programmes, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many Governments in developing countries could little afford to implement social policies and hence were unable to take practical measures to help the disabled, the elderly or young people.

65. Successive Governments in Barbados had aimed at equal participation by all citizens in development and had allocated the major portion of the resources in their five-year development plans to education, health care, housing and other social welfare programmes. The proportion of elderly people in Barbados was increasing. Public-sector health care was provided for the elderly free of charge, with specific attention to housing, improved gerontology programmes, maintenance of the elderly in their own environment and training in geriatric care for nurses and doctors. The elderly had participated in a number of activities to mark the International Day for the Elderly on 1 October.

66. The major focus of disability programmes in Barbados was on children, involving skills, training, assessment, day care and a workshop. The day-care centre provided a viable alternative to institutional care. The national educational system provided for the needs of special children and a major objective was to integrate them into the general school population. With regard to youth, the Ministry of Community Development had recently launched a pilot youth scheme providing intensive skills training over a two-year period for 200 young people to prepare them for work.

67. The Government attached great importance to family life and was undertaking a family life education project, in cooperation with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization. A National Coordinating Committee had been established to promote awareness of the International Year of the Family and coordinate activities to that end. Preservation of the family was essential, given the correlation between the breakdown of the family unit and deviant behaviour in society.

68. His delegation believed that social development should be given greater prominence on the United Nations agenda. It endorsed the call for a world summit on social development, but stressed that failure to act with courage

(Mr. Maycock, Barbados)

and vision, recognizing the relationship between social and economic development, would mean that the question of social development would continue to be characterized by charts and statistics and familiar rhetoric, session after session.

69. Mr. ROKOTUIVUNA (Fiji) said that the world social situation must be monitored in depth on a regular basis, and his delegation supported the call for a full report on the world social situation in 1993 to facilitate elaboration of long-term strategies.

70. The greatest achievement of the Decade of Disabled Persons had been to make a greater number of people fully aware of the rights and needs of the disabled. The focus had now shifted to implementation, so that by the year 2000, disabled persons would be fully integrated as equals. In Fiji, it was the traditional responsibility of the family to look after disabled relatives, but that attitude had changed in recent years. As a result, his Government and non-governmental organizations had been working together on programmes for integration of disabled persons in society. Many who had benefited were now making valuable contributions in the workplace.

71. In keeping with the policies stemming from the 1985 International Youth Year, his Government had continued to give youth programmes high priority. Its two basic objectives were to improve chances for productive employment and to provide youth with conditions for constructive and satisfactory social existence. The growing number of elderly persons also needed special attention. Though thought to be unproductive in most nations, they could play an important role in society because of their many useful skills, which had been long neglected.

72. The extended family was still very much the norm in Fiji and many parts of the Pacific region. The transformation of the close-knit extended family structure into the more exclusive, nuclear one appeared to be the penalty for modernization and affluence. The 1994 International Year of the Family would provide an opportunity to consider the relative values of nuclear and extended families in the modern world. It should be possible to find a balance between the best of tradition and the best features of the modern, thus creating a more vibrant and meaningful basis for families of the future.

73. Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates) resumed the Chair.

74. Mr. STRUGAR (Yugoslavia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Albania, in his statement during the general debate, had made unfounded accusations in total contradiction to the facts regarding the rights of the ethnic Albanian minority in Yugoslavia. That statement represented yet another act of interference by the Government of Albania in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. It also contravened paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 713 (1991) and the principle of good-neighbourliness between States.

75. Mr. SOKALSKI (Director, Social Development Division) noted that a lively debate had just taken place on a range of social issues. The direct participation of representatives of the social groups in question - the disabled, the young and the elderly - had lent authenticity to the discussions. A majority of delegations had expressed explicit support for the convening of a world summit on social development, which was extremely encouraging.

76. The positive tone of comments on the reports of the Secretary-General on social development issues would no doubt be reflected in the forthcoming draft resolutions. Some of the draft resolutions submitted by the Commission for Social Development might require updating to include the Secretary-General's recommendations.

77. The pace of preparations for the International Year of the Family was impressive, but more help would soon be needed from Governments. Since the draft programme for the Year having been approved by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, the next step was to elaborate programmes at the national level. The United Nations Office at Vienna would ensure that the Year followed international standards of human rights and equality between men and women, but responsibility for implementation lay with Member States. The observance of the Year should be viewed as a continuum, with action beginning immediately and culminating in 1994. Since the next debate on the topic would not take place until 1993, regular information from Member States would be required in order to ensure coordination leading up to the 1994 observance.

78. In his view, the social area was simply "below the poverty line" in terms of resources. A closer alliance on social issues must be formed among the Secretariat, the various substantive bodies and the Fifth Committee so that their efforts were harmonized. He noted that, in response to an appeal, the Commission for Social Development had cut the number of its reports by half. That practice should, however, be followed in other organs as well. He also suggested that, in their statements in the general debate, Member States should provide more guidance to the Secretary-General on issues, rather than giving information on national implementation which, if received earlier, could have been included in the reports.

79. Mr. ISAKSSON (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that he was grateful for the comments on International Literacy Year. It was clear from the general debate that there was heightened awareness that illiteracy was part of general deprivation and poverty, and that literacy could be an important part of the solution. International Literacy Year was the beginning of a decade-long programme, and not an end in itself. His office had prepared an informal paper on the UNESCO contribution to the work of the United Nations system in the areas of the family and youth, which was available to delegations.

80. Mr. HOEGH (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons) said he had been pleased by the support shown for action to improve conditions for persons with disabilities. It was encouraging that many Member States were implementing legislation to assist their disabled populations. Almost without exception, delegations had said that more must be done in that area.

81. Every nation must take action to address disability issues, which played a significant role in general development. Assistance to the disabled must be the norm, and must not be subject to political or ideological considerations.

82. Many programmes and projects which would greatly improve conditions for the world's disabled population required funding assistance from any possible source. He appealed to Member States to give much more serious consideration to allocating a percentage of national budgets for the needs of the disabled community. If all nations acted on their words, many of the goals of the Decade would be achieved.

83. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its general discussion of item 94 (a).

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.